

REMARKS

Claims 17-20 and 23-29 remain in the application. Claims 1-16, 21 and 22 are cancelled. New claims 30-35 have been added. Only Claim 17 is in independent form.

Claim Objections

Claims 1 and 7 were objected to for various informalities. It is respectfully submitted that the objections are now moot in view of the cancellation of Claims 1-16.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 8, 12, 13, 20 and 26-29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention.

Of the remaining claims, the Applicant has undertaken substantial amendments to overcome all of the noted rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. The Applicant has amended many of the remaining claims for the purpose of more particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the Applicant regards as the invention. It is respectfully submitted that the amended and new claims fully comply with 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, and that the rejections based thereon are overcome.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1-8, 17 and 21-25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Farrant (U.S. Patent 4,372,621).

Farrant discloses a suspension joint including a bearing insert, however, the bearing insert does not meet several limitations found in Applicant's invention as defined in amended Claim 17. Specifically, Farrant's bearing insert does not include a discontinuity of the type set forth in Applicant's amended Claim 17, which discontinuity extends completely through the bearing body both radially and axially to form a full-length gap. As a result, Farrant's bearing insert functions in a substantially different manner from that of the Applicant's claimed invention. Furthermore, Farrant's bearing insert fails to disclose radial slots of unequal radial depth. As now more clearly defined in Claim 17, the Applicant's radial slots are of the "stopped" variety which extend radially outwardly to a termination point contained (i.e., embedded) within the bearing body. In other words, as more clearly defined in Claim 17, Farrant's slots (24) cannot be considered radial slots pursuant to the terminology and definitions set forth in amended Claim 17.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Farrant's disclosure fails to anticipate the Applicant's invention as defined in amended Claim 17.

Claims 1-4 and 6-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Strobl (U.S. Patent 5,326,178).

Strobl discloses a washer-like device of the type used as a take-up spring in a bearing joint. Strobl's shaped washer fails to meet numerous limitations recited in the main Claim 17, as amended. For example, Strobl's shaped washer element (7, 8, 9) does not have a semi-spherical inner surface for engaging the stud head. The washer element (7, 8, 9) does not include a discontinuity as required in Claim 17. Furthermore, the radial slots (10, 11, 17) all appear to have an equal radial depth. Whereas, Applicant's main Claim 17 requires that no more than two

of the radial slots have an identical depth. All eight of Strobl's slots (10, 11, 17) have an identical radial depth.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that, in view of the substantial and clarifying amendments made to Claim 17, Strobl does not anticipate Applicant's claimed invention.

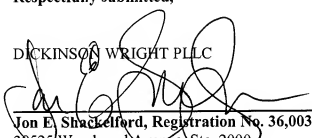
Reconsideration of this application as amended is respectfully requested.

It is believed that this application is now in condition for allowance. Further and favorable action is requested.

The Patent Office is authorized to charge or refund any fee deficiency or excess to Deposit Account No. 04-1061.

Respectfully submitted,

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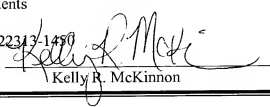
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